# NORTH ALABAMA

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NORTH ALABAMA

Extreme Sports and Recreation in Nature

### the APPALACHIAN FOOTHILLS the TENNESSEE RIVER & 8 BIG LAKES MILLIONS OF ACRES OF WOODLANDS ADVENTURE

#### Jorth Alabama marks

the southern extremity of the beautiful Appalachian Mountains. The mighty Tennessee River cuts a large valley across our width, creating an abundance of creeks, streams, rivers, mountains, and lakes. Here you will find level highlands from 700 to 800 feet, a narrow strip of gentle rolling lowlands varying in elevation from 500 to 800 feet on each side of the Tennessee River, and a rugged section with steep mountain-sides, deep narrow valleys, and flat mountain-tops from 400 to 1,800 feet.

Preserving and enjoying nature is a rich part of our heritage. Our area includes the Bankhead National Forest, the Sipsey Wilderness Area, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, eight expansive lakes, millions of acres of woodlands, and hundreds of miles of nature-based trails.

From kayaking and white water rafting, to rock climbing, hiking and biking, we invite you to come explore and see what each of the 16 counties of North Alabama have to offer.

## **UUWN IHE RIVER 6 UN IHE** LAKES

World-Class Fishing Bass, Crappie, Catfish, Striper Bear Creek Lakes - 8,000 acres total Composed of four impoundments in Northwest Alabama, each with its own distinct personality.

H. Neely Henry Lake - 11,200 acres Rippling blue waters and 339 miles of shoreline. Runs northsouth next to Gadsden.

Lake Guntersville - 69,000 acres Alabama's largest impoundment with more than 900 miles of shoreline. Stretches from Scottsboro to Guntersville.

Lewis Smith Lake - 21,000 acres A deep, clear lake near Cullman with feeder streams, bays and sloughs. Rainbow trout fishery is located on the Sipsey Fork.

Pickwick Lake - 43,100 acres Runs from Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia to the Alabama-Mississippi border.

Weiss Lake - 30,000 acres Offering 447 miles of shoreline next to the resort city of Centre.

Wheeler Lake - 67,000 acres This reservoir on the Tennessee River runs from Huntsville through Decatur to Wheeler Dam in Lauderdale County.

Wilson Lake - 15,500 acres West of Wheeler Dam to the east city limits of Florence and Muscle Shoals.

www.NorthAlabama.org for details.

### CANOEING, KAYAKING, PADDLE BOARDING

#### **Beardo Outdoors**

*Florence, Ala., (256) 577-5138, www.beardooutdoors.com* A small mobile outfitter that specializes in creating a memorable experience, Beardo Outdoors offers guided and self guided tours of isups, kayaks and canoes on the Tennessee River and beautiful Cypress Creek. We deliver the equipment to your location and have hourly, daily, weekly rentals available.

#### **Big Wills Outfitters**

in Paller Manufactures

*Attalla, Ala., (256) 538-3226, www.bigwillsoutfitters.com* Big Wills is a full service outfitter offering canoe and kayak rentals on Big Wills Creek through the peaceful countryside.

#### Lower Bear Creek Canoe Trail

Bear Creek Development Authority, www.bearcreeklakes.com The Lower Bear Creek Canoe Trail is the lower portion of Bear Creek at Red Bay, Ala., down to Pickwick Lake. This 35-mile stretch offers a serene trip, except in flood stage, and is suited for the beginning canoeist. Canoeing on Bear Creek is enjoyable at any time of the year, but May to October is the most popular season. The water level is normally low during the summer and fall.

UnPhiltoredurysking.com

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#### **Limestone County Canoe & Kayak Trail**

*Elkmont, Ala., www.visitathensal.com/canoe-and-kayak-trail.html* A class 1 stream, with towering bluffs, untouched forests and rolling meadows. The route begins at Elkmont, Ala. just west of I-65 at Exit 361. It is 21.9 miles along scenic Elk River with five easy in-and-out points. Elk River water levels are TVA Dam controlled, which means good canoeing even during dry summers.

#### **True Adventure Sports**

#### Fort Payne, Ala., www.trueadventuresports.com

Your enthusiastic guides to the outdoor activities on Lookout Mountain (DeKalb County/Ft. Payne) providing outdoor gear, rock climbing, rappelling, camping, caving, canoes, kayaks, snacks, guided trips, lessons, and team building. Jet skis available for rent. Accommodations available for rent.

#### **Cypress Creek Public Access Area**

#### Florence, Ala., www.florenceal.org

With the addition of Cypress Creek Public Access point, the public now has a point where they can launch their kayaks and canoes and remove them at Wildwood park in Florence. Free parking is available. The area consist of 22 acres that will eventually include walking trails.

Continued >>

## WHITE WATER RAFTING

Bear Creek Floatway - Hodges, Ala.

A Class 1 floatway with the exception of the difficult Class IV Upper Factory Falls area and the Class VI Lower Factory Falls area. www.BearCreekLakes.com

#### South Sauty Creek - Grove Oak, Ala.

Bucks Pocket to Guntersville Lake section of South Sauty Creek in Alabama is 1.2 miles long and has been rated as a class IV-V section by American Whitewater. marshallcountytourismandsports.com **Warrior River - Locust Fork River - Blountsville, Ala.** Whitewater enthusiasts come from all over the southeast to enjoy the beauty and thrill of the Locust Fork River. With scenic beauty unsurpassed in Alabama - jagged cliffs, waterfalls, whitewater, smooth flowing sections, and sandy beaches - this mountain stream flows freely through Etowah, Marshall, and Blount Counties to form the Black Warrior River in northwest Jefferson County. Locust Fork boasts: class III and IV rapids and is site of the annual Locust Fork Whitewater Classic, the final race for the Alabama Cup.

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#### **Bankhead National Forest / Sipsey Wilderness**

Double Springs, Ala., https://www.fs.usda.gov/alabama The William B. Bankhead National Forest is one of Alabama's four National Forests, covering 181,230 acres. It is home to Alabama's only National Wild and Scenic River, the Sipsey Fork. Recreational Areas offer so many trails you could spend weeks here.

There are nine recreation areas scattered about the Bankhead National Forest, each offering a unique experience of its own. Facilities for camping, picnicking, fishing, hiking, and swimming are abundant. All facilities are designed with forest users in mind and provide varying challenges for everyone from the novice to the expert. Forest users will find that each area has its own personality and with the changing seasons, even that personality will change.

Sipsey is the largest national forest wilderness area east of the Mississippi. The Sipsey Fork river offers a peaceful float trip combined with the beautiful scenery and great camping that distinguishes the Bankhead from other National Forests. While canoeing the Sipsey Fork you will pass magnificent walls of rock which has been carved for thousands of years by the erosive power of water. As the Sipsey Fork begins to merge with Smith Lake the creek becomes non-turbulent and wide. This area must be paddled but offers a slow-pace if interested in fishing or just a slow-paced family trip.

#### Warrior River - Locust Fork River

#### Blountsville, Ala.

Locust Fork in Alabama is 10 miles long and it is classified as a class I-III section by American Whitewater. Along the scenic route you will find historic covered bridges, abundant fishing availability, easy access for swimming and picnicking, and remarkably beautiful natural scenery.

#### Alabama Scenic River Trail

Madison, Ala., (256) 426-0558, www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com The Alabama Scenic River Trail is the only blueway that has it all—from mountain streams to river delta to the salty waves of the Gulf of Mexico. Paddling and powerboat experiences and exploration abound along nearly 5000 miles of accessible waterways on over 43 waterways with over 40 outfitters and adventure services to serve and assist you. We have amenities and campsites to support everything from long-distance touring to organized paddles to races, overnight trips or any kind of day trip you might imagine.

#### Eagle Awareness Program

Guntersville, Ala., www.explorelakeguntersville.com, www.alapark.com/EagleAwarenessWeekends

Lake Guntersville State Park offers Eagle Awareness weekends annually in January and February, which include live bird demonstrations and programs provided by notable speakers, guided trips to eagle nesting and the natural beauty of the mountains and Lake Guntersville. Guntersville has one of the largest concentrations of American bald eagles in the country. Lodging packages are available.

#### **Flint Creek Canoe Trail**

#### Hartselle Ala., www.alabamascenicrivertrail.com

A 20-mile route featuring campsites, mileage markers and information kiosks from Flint Creek on U.S. 31, Hartselle through Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge to Point Mallard Park in Decatur. The Flint Creek Canoe Trail features several access points and campsites so boaters can easily plan a day trip or a longer journey. The route is the newest addition to the Alabama Scenic River Trail system, which features more than 5,300 miles of designated canoe and kayak routes in the state.

Whitewater rafting at Buck's Pocket State Park.

## RAPPELLING

#### **True Adventure Sports**

Fort Payne, Ala., www.trueadventuresports.com

Your enthusiastic guides to the outdoor activities on Lookout Mountain (DeKalb County/Ft. Payne) providing outdoor gear, rock climbing, rappelling, camping, caving, canoes, kayaks, snacks, guided trips, <u>lessons, and team</u> building. Accommodations available for rent.

#### **Cherokee Rock Village**

Leesburg, Ala., www.cherokeerockvillage.com

A unique mountaintop public park with amenities such as picnic tables, pavilions, and miles of trails, caves, crags, and crevices plus a 100 mile view of 3 states. Rock climbing, bouldering, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, geocaching, and more outdoor family activities. Primitive camping available. Open 24 hours a day.

#### Screaming Eagle Ziplines

Lake Guntersville State Park, Guntersville , Ala., www.lakeguntersvillezipline.com

Experience breathtaking heights and enjoy incredible views of Lake Guntersville and thousands of acres of wildlife with zipline canopy tours at Lake Guntersville State Park. A must do adventure for the entire family when visiting the beautiful lake town of Guntersville.

#### **Smith Lake Zipline and Aerial Adventures**

Cullman, Ala., www.smithlakezipline.com

Situated on Smith Lake in Cullman County, Smith Lake Ziplines and Aerial Adventures offers a zipline canopy tour for the whole family. Having the longest zipline in Alabama, this course offers great views, different tour levels and the adrenaline rush guests are looking for.

## HIKING AND **BIKING WITH IFKI-Y**

#### **NORTH ALABAMA'S STATE PARKS**

#### **Cathedral Caverns State Park**

Off Hwy. 72, (256) 728-8193, www.alapark.com

Cathedral Caverns State Park has approximately five and a half miles of hiking trails among the 493 acres of land in the park. Each trail is marked and named by color. Colors are painted throughout each trail for guidance throughout your hiking adventure. Inside the cavern, you will find some amazing formations including Goliath, a huge stalagmite column that reaches the ceiling of the cave some 45 feet above! Open year round. Hours 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission charged.

#### Joe Wheeler State Park & Resort

#### Rogersville, Ala., www.alapark.com

Joe Wheeler State Park has approximately 16 miles of hiking/biking trails. The 2,500-acre park on Wheeler Lake also offers a lodge, hotel, restaurant, marina, golf course, campground, cabins, tennis, boat launch, swimming, picnicking, hiking, banquet facilities, boat rentals, and pavilions.

#### **Monte Sano State Park**

#### Huntsville, Ala., www.alapark.com

From early morning to dusk, one can easily escape to the park and enjoy 22 miles of scenic hiking/biking trails. With varying degrees of ease and difficulty, hikers and bikers are sure to find just the right trail.

#### **DeSoto State Park**

#### Fort Payne, Ala., www.alapark.com

DeSoto State Park has over 35 miles of hiking trails, including 11+ miles of mountain bike trails in the main area of the park. DeSoto State Park's trail system boasts interesting rock formations, small seasonal waterfalls, a variety of diverse plant communities, plentiful animal life and beautiful views of the West Fork of Little River, which flows downstream into interconnecting Little River Canyon.

#### **Buck's Pocket State Park**

#### Grove Oak, Ala., www.alapark.com

Secluded in a natural pocket of the Appalachian Mountain foothills, with more than 15 miles of trails. There are 24 modern campsites.

#### Lake Guntersville State Park & Lodge

#### Guntersville, Ala., www.alapark.com

Lake Guntersville State Park has over 36 miles of hiking, biking, and horse trails among 6,000 acres of wooded land in and around the park.

#### **Rickwood Caverns State Park**

Warrior, Ala., (205) 647-9692, (256) 300-1223, www.alapark.com Rickwood Caverns State Park offers four hiking trails ranging in distance from .4 miles to two miles. Cave contains 260-million-vear-old formations. Other amenities include a campground, swimming pool, and picnic area.



#### **REGIONAL HIKING AND BIKING DESTINATIONS**

#### Walls of Jericho

#### Scottsboro, Ala., www.alabamaforeverwild.com/walls-iericho

The Walls of Jericho Trail System in located within the Forever Wild Walls of Jericho Tract in Jackson County, Ala. which consists of 12,510 acres bordering Tennessee. The tract is comprised of mountainous and wooded terrain, hosting caves, springs, rocky bluffs, steep canyon walls and portions of the headwaters of the Paint Rock River. Bird watching, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, stream fishing and wildflower viewing are all accommodated on Alabama's Walls of Jericho Tract. There are currently 3 hiking trails available, the Walls of Jericho Trail (6 miles round-trip), the Bear Den Point Loop (4.7 miles round-trip) and the South Rim Trail (1 mile round-trip).

#### Noah Bike, Car & Motorcycle Trail

Athens, Ala., www.visitathensal.com/noah-bike--car-trail.html This 89-mile trail is a bicycle, motorcycle, and vintage car trail offering a beautiful ride in Limestone County of Northern Alabama. The Trail connects historical sites, old cemeteries, and places to picnic.

#### **Richard Martin Rails to Trails**

Elkmont, Ala., www.visitathensal.com/richard-martin-trail.html

A multi-use rail trail open to hikers, walkers, runners, and horseback riders built on an abandoned rail corridor as part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. The 10.2 miles trail winds through wetlands, the Civil War site Battle of Sulphur Creek Trestle and downtown Elkmont.

#### Land Trust of North Alabama

#### Huntsville, Ala., www.LandTrustNAL.ora

Ten public nature preserves and one paved greenway offer more than 80 miles of public trails for hiking, biking, and outdoor recreation. Land Trust nature preserves are open from dawn to dusk daily (with the exception of Cane Creek Canyon) and all are free to access.

#### **Cherokee Rock Village**

#### Leesburg, Ala., www.cherokeerockvillage.com

A unique mountaintop public park with amenities such as picnic tables, pavilions, and miles of trails, caves, crags, and crevices plus a 100 mile view of 3 states. Rock climbing, bouldering, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, geocaching, and more outdoor family activities. Primitive camping available. Open 24 hours a day.

#### **Natural Bridge of Alabama**

Natural Bridge, Ala., (205) 486-5330

The 148-foot sandstone bridge towers 60 feet above winding pathways and is the longest natural bridge east of the Rockies. Found in a forest setting with natural gardens, picnicking, nature trails, concessions, and gift shop. Hours: Open daily 8 a.m.-sunset, year round.

#### Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Decatur, Ala. https://fws.gov/refuge/wheeler

Offers wildlife displays, orientation video, wildlife observation building, hunting, fishing, and hiking, biking and horseback riding trails.

#### **Dismals Canyon**

#### Russellville, Ala., www.dismalscanyon.com

A National Natural Landmark and one of the finest examples of ecological and geological features composing our nation's natural history. Pristine wilderness, romantic cabins, secluded campsites, hiking, swimming, canoeing, wildflowers, a country store, and more. Cabins and group tours available year round by reservation.



#### **Cane Creek Canyon Nature Preserve**

Tuscumbia, Ala., (256) 381-6301

www.landtrustnal.org/properties/cane-creek-preserve/

This breathtaking 693-acre property southwest of Tuscumbia offers miles of marked and maintained hiking trails leading the hiker to scenic canyon overlooks, rich wildflower areas, creek access points, pioneer cabin sites, and other natural, cultural and archeological features. Cane Creek Canyon Nature Preserve is open to the public Friday – Sunday from 7 AM – 5 PM and on major holidays, except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

#### **Little River Canyon National Preserve**

#### Fort Payne, Ala., www.nps.gov/liri/index.htm

One of the deepest gorges in the East, this unit of the National Park System contains spectacular scenery, breathtaking waterfalls, and a number of rare plants and animals. Some of the most popular activities include picnicking, visiting overlooks on the scenic drive (County Rd. 176), over 26 miles of trails and over 20 miles of backcountry roads, hiking, kayaking, rappelling/rock climbing, hunting, and fishing. Open year-round.

#### **Bankhead National Forest**

Double Springs, Ala., www.fs.usda.gov/alabama

The Bankhead National Forest offers over 90 miles of recreational trails. You can enjoy hiking, bicycle and horseback riding, and a trail for your all-terrain vehicle. The forest covers 181,230 acres and is home to Alabama's only National Wild and Scenic River, the Sipsey Fork.

There are nine recreation areas scattered about the Bankhead National Forest, each offering a unique experience of its own. Facilities for camping, picnicking, fishing, hiking, and swimming are abundant. All facilities are designed with forest users in mind.



#### Sharon Johnston Park

New Market, AL, (256) 532-3698, https://www.madisoncountyal.gov/ departments/recreation-department/sharon-johnston-parkSharon Johnston Park is located just 20 minutes from downtown Huntsville, the 250 acre park lies nestled in the rolling hills of northeast Madison County. The park includes: 12 acre fishing lake stocked annually with catfish, brim, crappie, and bass. olympic size swimming pool, campground facilities, shooting range, arena, soccer fields, 18-hole disc golf course, and marked 5k walking/running course. All facilities are handicap accessible.

#### Willow Oak Lodge

*Spruce Pine, AL*, (256) 815-3391, https://www.visitwillowoak.com/ Located in the northwest corner of Alabama, this 1,000 acre preserve has been developed and managed specifically for wildlife habitat. Offers whitetail deer, turkey and quail hunting, as well as, lake fishing for bass. Accommodations include the main lodge, a four bedroom cabin, a barn, and two cottages.

## HITIN' THE TRAIL Richard Martin Rails to Trails

#### Elkmont, Ala., www.visitathensal.com/richard-martin-trail.html

A multi-use rail trail open to hikers, walkers, runners, and horseback riders built on an abandoned rail corridor as part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. The 10.2 miles trail winds through wetlands, the Civil War site Battle of Sulphur Creek Trestle and downtown Elkmont.

#### Seven Springs Lodge

#### Tuscumbia, Ala., www.SevenSpringsLodge.net

This facility offers horseback trail riding. Organized equestrian group trail rides held throughout the 20,000+ acres of meadow and woodland, dotted with waterfalls. Silver grain silos cabins, outfitted as bunkhouses, along with campsites and horse stalls.

#### **Bankhead National Forest**

#### Double Springs, Ala., https://www.fs.usda.gov/alabama

Horseback riders have a choice of riding at Owl Creek Trail in the Sipsey Wilderness. There are 13.3 miles of trails in the wilderness designated for horses. In the northeastern portion of the forest, the 25-mile Owl Creek Non-Motorized Trail provides an opportunity to see beautiful waterfalls, sandstone cliffs, and deep gorges. The Owl Creek Horse Camp provides primitive overnight campsites for trail riders on a first come, first serve basis.



#### Indian Mountain ATV Park

#### Piedmont, Ala., (256) 300-1223, https://indianmtnatvpark.com/

Indian Mountain ATV Park is one of the largest private off-road parks in the South with 4,700 acres nestled in the Appalachian Mountain range to explore. Adventure seekers are treated to scenic views from every angle and miles of trails including the Pinhoti National Recreation Trail to ride or hike. Special events and festivals are held throughout the year and cabins and camping are available.

#### Buck's Pocket State Park

#### Grove Oak, Ala., (256) 622-8400,

https://www.alapark.com/parks/bucks-pocket-state-park/orv-trail Discover some of Alabama's most beautiful and rugged terrain on the new ORV trail at Buck's Pocket State Park. The ORV trail was designed to be a slow ride through

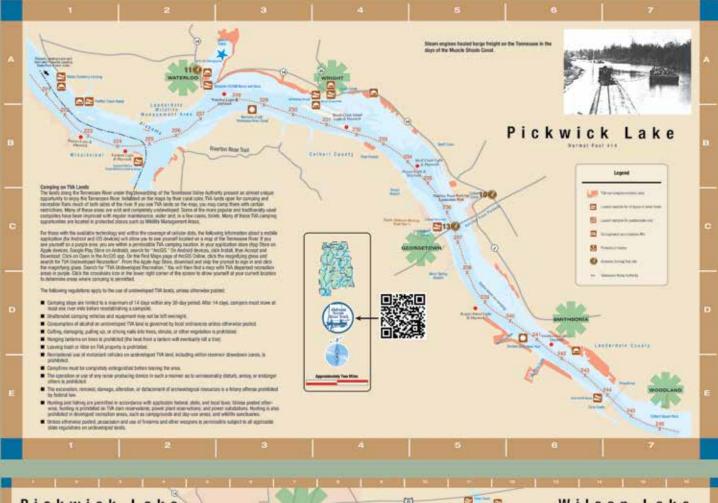
ar bucks rocket outer rank The Orky train was beech/hardwood forest, paralleling South Sauty Creek. The trail passes through the creek side primitive campsite area, across Morgan's Cove lake access area and continues another 2.3 miles. The trail is conveniently located with access to the newly renovated campground. Along the 6.3 mile ORV trail, there are many opportunities for scenic views to see some of Northeast Alabama's unique flora and fauna. In addition, there are a few locations to picnic and fish. ORV's must utilize the campground/park office area only to register and access the trail.





## Alabama Scenic River Trail

The Alabama Scenic River Trail spans the width and breath of the state including paddling and powerboat experiences and exploration abound along over 5000 miles of accessible waterways on over 43 waterways. Featured on the following pages are the Alabama Scenic River Trails found in North Alabama. It's all waiting for the whitewater enthusiast, the naturalist and the family who just wants to play.







No camping/no open fires on Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge lands (green on map)



The **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge** was established to protect various wildlife species across the present landscape. Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge was established July 7, 1938 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife. It was

the first refuge ever superimposed on a hydro-electric impoundment and in the early stages, considered an experiment to determine the possibility of attracting migratory waterfowl onto a multipurpose impoundment. www.fws.gov/refuge/wheeler

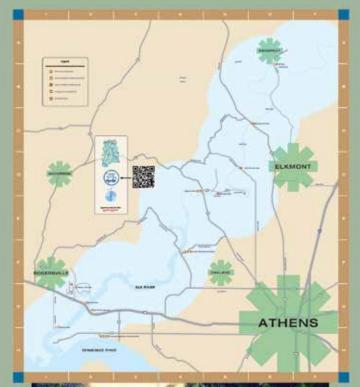


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Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

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